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## Lesson 1 – Safeguarding Your Identity While Online: Screen Names and Passwords

### Learning Objectives

Students will:

- state the dangers in choosing an unsafe user name
- classify the types of personal information that should be avoided in constructing a safe user name
- assess the dangers in choosing an unsafe password
- identify strategies for making passwords safe
- demonstrate that they can choose a safe and secure password and user name

### Peer-to-Peer Activity

Provide a copy of the reference/activity pages “Be Smart – Be Safe” for each student.

- Is a person really anonymous if they have provided personal information in a screen name?
- How can a safe screen/user name and/or password help you avoid danger on the Internet?

The reference/activity page will prompt students to create safe passwords using the strategies listed.

### Discussion – Information Overview

- As a class, review the information found on the activity pages.
- Have each group address one or more of the questions and activity answers.
- Discuss any areas that are unclear.
- Discuss why non-identifying screen names and passwords are important.
- Make sure to cover the idea that in order to protect identity in the physical world, online screen/user names should never include personal or identifying information, including (but not limited to):
  - first and/or last name
  - address
  - phone number
  - date of birth (complete or partial) or age
  - social-security number
  - e-mail address
  - combinations of personal information, such as listed above
  - combinations of personal information, such as listed above, plus descriptions like (but not limited to) gender, school name, favorite sport, favorite celebrity, family member names
- Go over the passwords created in the group. Discuss each one, and have students review to make sure that each follows the listed strategies. Emphasize that a password should:
  - be lengthy, at least eight characters
  - contain a combination of letters, numbers, and symbols
  - be changed when its secrecy is in doubt
  - not contain personal information
  - not be shared
  - not be easily guessed
  - not be provided in an e-mail, even if requested

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## Group Activity

- Provide students with this list of screen names (write on the board or read aloud):
  - GTaylorplaysGuitar
  - carrie\_lewis@gmc.net
  - REMforever
  - Miamisue13
  - canarielover
  - nymets29
  - brandonclassof09
  - wellesleygirl
  - namelessjester9
- Have students arrange the screen names in two lists to show those that contain identifying (or potentially identifying) information and those that do not.

KEY:

### Contain Identifying (or Potentially Identifying) Information

- andersonMJ (initials and last name)
- carrie\_lewis@gmc.net (e-mail address)
- Miamisue13 (name, location, age)
- brandonclassof09 (name and graduation year—tells age)
- GTaylorplaysGuitar (initial, name, hobby)
- wellesleygirl (location, gender)

DO NOT Contain Identifying Information:

- REMforever
- canarielover
- nymets29
- namelessjester9

- Have each student create a safe user names and passwords, which would be appropriate and non-identifiable on the Internet.
- List the safe screen names and passwords on the board.
- Ask students to think about whether the screen names and/or passwords they use could be made safer.

## Conclusion

- Remind students that they need to avoid providing personal/identifying information while online.
- Encourage students to change their screen names or passwords, if needed, and discuss what they have learned with their parents.
- Remind students to register at [www.isafe.org](http://www.isafe.org) by clicking on "Create and Account" if they haven't done so already.

# Be Smart & Be Safe

The Internet is not anonymous. When you sign on, others have access to you. Your e-mail address, screen name, and password serve as barriers between you and others. You need to maintain this barrier by not giving out private information. There are many out there who would like to know more about you for various reasons:

- They could want to harm you.
- They could want to steal from you.
- They could use information to conduct their own business either by selling your info or by using it in an illegal manner.

## User ID/Screen name

A User ID is a nickname you select to identify yourself in e-mail, chats, etc.

- DO NOT USE personal information that can identify you, including:
  - your real first and last name
  - any part of your address
  - your location (i.e. hilliegirl, HaverhillGuy)
  - your telephone number
  - your e-mail address
- Do not use an inappropriate suggestive name or word to describe yourself (i.e. sexyman42, hotbabygirl). You may attract the wrong kind of people.
- Do not use pornographic or obscene words.

Be careful that you don't combine pieces of personal information with other information that can be used to identify you or your location, such as in the screen name TSmith94Yankees.

## Your Screen Name

Think about your own screen name. What does it say about you?

When you choose a screen name, you want something that allows you to remain anonymous, or unknown. Don't include personal information.

# Secret Passwords

A password is a series of letters, numbers, and/or symbols used to log you in to a computer system. Passwords are used to access e-mail, join chat rooms, etc. They are usually between six and eight characters long.



## Password Security

**A password is of no use to you if it is not a complete secret.**

- Don't tell anyone your password.
- Don't write your password down anywhere.
- When you decide on a password, make sure it can't be guessed.
- If you think there's even a chance someone else might know your password, change it.
- Make sure no one is standing near you when you enter your password.

## How to Create a Safe Password

**A good password should . . .**

- be lengthy, at least eight characters
- contain a combination of letters, numbers, and symbols
- be changed when its secrecy is in doubt
- not contain personal information
- not be shared
- not be easily guessed
- not be provided in an e-mail, even if requested